

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

The invention provides a method and system for sending relatively identical web pages, when requested by subsequent users, with substantial reduction of bandwidth. The server determines a "template web page" corresponding to the actual information on the web page, and having a set of insertion points, at which changed data can be inserted by the client. The server sends a JavaScript program corresponding to the template web page, which makes reference to the template web page and the changed data, along with sending the actual changed data itself. A first user requesting the web page receives the entire web page, while a second user requesting the web page (or the first user re-requesting the web page at a later time) receives the template information plus only the changed data. The server re-determines the template web page from time to time, such as when a ratio of changed data to template web page data exceeds a selected threshold. The server identifies the particular template web page to the client using a unique identifier (an "E-tag") for the particular data sent in response to the request. Since the E-tag refers to the template, not the underlying web page, when the standard client makes its conditional request for the web page "if not changed", the server responds that the web page is "not changed" even if it really is, but embeds the changed data in a cookie it sends to the client with the server response to the client request.